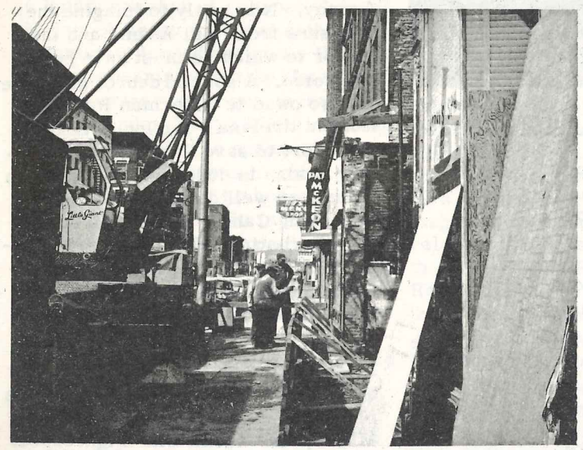
AIM

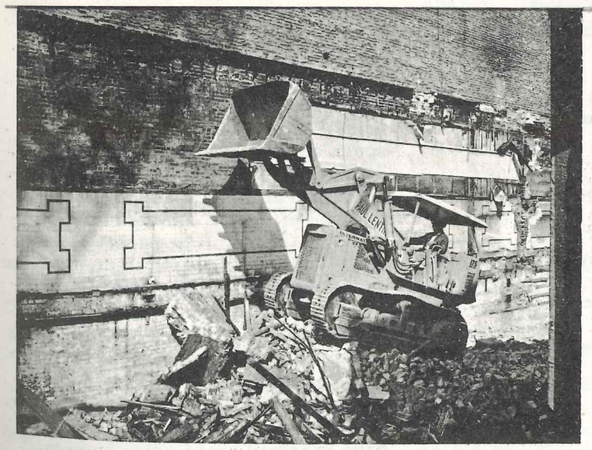
THE BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT

Published by IPAC | Vol. 3, No. 2, May 15, 1968 | Single Issue Price 15¢

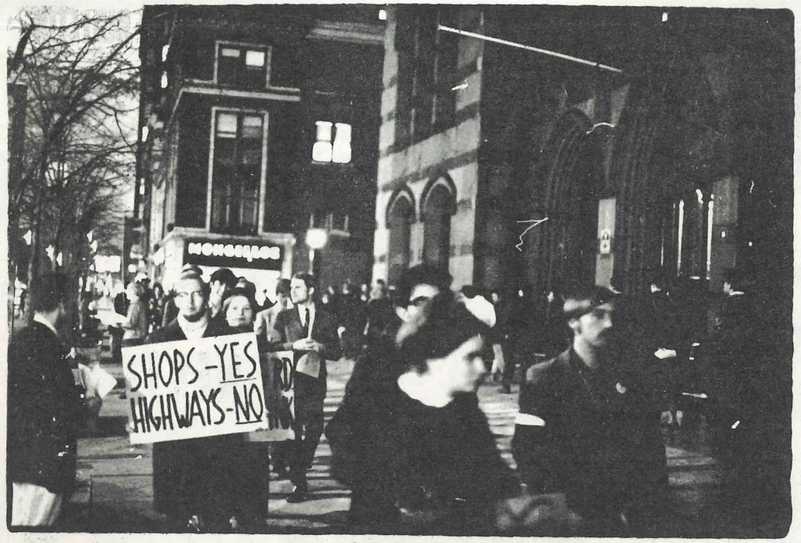
STATE ST.

WHAT HAPPENED WHAT NEXT--





Demolition on this block of State Street began almost immediately after the Board of Aldermen passed the Redevelopment Agency's road plan by one vote. The kitten at lower left apparently was born in the basement of a building demolished the day before this picture was taken. It was scooped up in the wreckage by the Little Giant (steamshovel above), and dropped on top of the truck from which it fell to the street. It was found miraculously unhurt by a workman. Another workman took it home with him. Relocation of tenants takes its toll.



state street cont.

Those who signed petitions, attended hearings, made phone calls to aldermen, and picketed at City Hall felt sick and disgusted after the Board of Aldermen finally voted through the Redevelopment Agency's State Street plan on April 11th. But it is not too soon to ask what exactly was voted. How did it get that way? Were our efforts really in vain? Is there nothing more to do?

The really heartbreaking vote was of course the vote to keep the Agency's planned 6 lanes of "road"way -- call it what you like, it will be full of speeding cars and trucks bringing noise and air pollution for all -- with a 100 foot area in between. This means the total destruction of all the buildings on the railroad side of State Street, and gives the Agency the one element in the plan really essential to their Ring Road. The vote on this decisive issue was 14 in favor of the Agency's 6 lanes and 13 in favor of an amendment which called for 4 lanes with a maximum width of 48 feet. (This would have meant only a slight narrowing of the present sidewalks.) We give here the names Save them for election time.

For the People of the City

Anthony P. Ambrogio
George J. Cahill
Jeremiah Covington
Nicholas DeCilla
John L. DiRienzo
Salvatore Ferraiuolo
Blaze A. Garbatini
William F. Gray
Alan Lessler
J. Peter Lynch
William Mrowka
William H. Rees
Edward J. Tacinelli

Against the People of the City

Aaron W. Aronow
Victor A. DeCarlo
Mrs. Louise DeLauro
Joseph J. Egan
Paul A. Falcigno
Charles Gill
Leander C Gray
David B. Greenberg
Bartholomew F. Guida
William L. Miller
Raymond A. Moore
William Muehl
William T. O'Connell
Robert Rubin

Absent

Carl R. Johnson
Peter J. Kelly
Vincent E. Mauro

This was an all or nothing vote, so the closeness of it makes it just that much more bitter. But several aldermen now concede that only a month before, no more than 3 aldermen would have dreamed of opposing the Redevelopment Agency. The State Street project has been on the drawing boards for 11 years; active protest only began at the last minute. Even so, these efforts brought the Board of Aldermen's only serious challenge to the Agency's dictates in 14 years! 2

Among those supporting the effort to prevent a 6 lane State Street, Alderman Ambrogio, the Majority Leader of the Board, deserves special praise for his courageous opposition to the Agency. It is easly to imagine the pressure from Mel Adams and the Mayor to which he must have been subjected. A special debt of gratitude is also owed to Alderman Rees who worked tirelessly for long weeks in the effort to save State Street. Further praise is deserved by Alderman Lynch, as well as those aldermen (including Cahill, DeCilla, Ferraiuolo, Garbatini, Wm. Gray, and Tacinelli) who sent a telegram to Washington requesting an extension of the April 15th HUD deadline.

It is significant, and depressing, that among those supporting the Agency's plan were 3 professors: Falcigno, Miller, and Muehl. One might expect them to be sufficiently independent from the usual pressures of the political arena to vote for what the concerned people of New Haven wanted instead of rubber-stamping what has been concocted by the Agency's experts. Alderman Falcigno could speak only of "adequate traffic flow," "the great need for northbound movement of traffic," "space to separate the load of traffic coming into the city." The needs of the people already living in the city somehow didn't come up. Alderman Miller, who kept referring to the roadway as a "highway" despite all the efforts of Agency people to censor that term. confessed he had not devoted as much time to studying the matter as perhaps he should have. He also mentioned "the many calls I have received against this project." But he said he could not see that the

cont. p. 3

state street cont.

highway would cause air pollution, or that it had anything to do with giving roads priority over people or housing, so he went along with the Agency's "traffic and parking engineers." He gave no reason for his apparent confidence that these experts care about or are able to solve any problems that go beyond the efficient moving of traffic. Yet it is just the complex human problems which we have a right to expect our aldermen to deal with.

One of the most puzzling and disturbing votes in favor of the widening to 6 lanes was that of Leander Gray, a Negro. A broad spectrum of the black community turned out at the Hall of Records hearing about the State Street plan to express their vehement opposition. Leander Gray in fact is rumored to have promised to oppose the 6 lane highway in the caucus meeting just before the vote. If he had stuck to that position, the fight to save State Street would actually have been won! Yet, without offering any explanation he changed his mind and gave the Agency what the most wanted. His action seems especially strange because on the final vote -- whether to accept or reject the whole amended project -- he voted not to accept it with the core of 11 uncompromising opponents.

Three aldermen, DeLauro, Falcigno, and Ferraiuolo, live in the area most immediately affected by the project and from which the most widespread and consistent opposition has come. DeLauro and Falcigno were with the Agency all the way. Ferraiuolo voted against the 6 lanes, against the huge garage, against the plan as a whole.

The major victory of the evening, for which all who protested must take the credit, was the severe curtailment of what Ralph Marcarelli aptly dubbed "the Chinese wall" -- the half-mile, 6 story, 5000 car garage which would have effectively isolated Wooster Square from downtown and the Green. The aldermen, by a count of 18 to 9, voted to limit this monstrosity to 2 blocks instead of 8. The only area where they permit an above-ground garage is in the 2 blocks between George and Chapel Streets. But that is also the area for which they have voted to study a possible mass transit center. Is there room for both? There are also rumors from good sources that the Redevelopment Agency had hoped to patch up its finances by floating 13 million dollars worth of bonds for the garage as originally planned. Without so vast a project, they may have a hard time getting things started. Furthermore, since the right to develop the garage has been taken away from the Parking Authority and given to the Redevelopment Agency, the specific plans for this part of the project must come before the Board of Aldermen again. Destruction of buildings, however, is going full speed ahead.

Two other amendments, voted by a unanimous voice vote, are primarily symbolic votes of no confidence in the Redevelopment Agency. One provides that "all displaced residents shall be relocated in suitable quarters at suitable rents, and that every displaced business shall be suitably relocated and shall have priority in the State Street Redevelopment and Renewal Area." It further insists that "serious consideration shall be given to both private and public housing and to the provisions of permitted housing uses." Agency apologists were quick to point out that these provisions are already part of the stated policies of the Agency. That was just the point: the aldermen made it clear that they knew the Agency's standard policy was to neglect relocation of residents and small businesses, and low-income housing. Their third amendment was an even clearer declaration that they do not believe the Agency's assurances on the Ring Road. They ordered "that the Agency shall acquire no property north of the Trumbull Street ramp of Interstate 91." This was an attempt to ensure that no Ring Road would be built linking Interstate 91 with Route 34. This amendment unfortunately offers no real guarantee against the Ring Road, but the message is clear. All the amendments are absolute victories for the people who took a stand against the undemocratic attempts by the Agency to dictate radical changes in our environment without our consent.

WE MUST NOT STOP NOW. Keep up the pressure. Phone or write your alderman and let him hear either your praise or blame for his vote. Those who voted in your interest are in some cases already feeling the unpleasant consequences for their own private interests of going against the Redevelopment Agency and the Mayor. Only your consistent support will encourage them to be truly representative of the people. Remember that it takes courage and self-sacrifice to vote against a power that has millions of dollars in patronage to hand out. 3

The State Street plan can still be stopped by the Federal government. Write today to Robert C. Weaver, Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington, D.C. 20410, urging HUD not to accept the Redevelopment Agency's road plan in its present form. In addition to noting aspects of the plan you don't like, point out the fact that the 6 lane State Street is an integral part of the Ring Road, and this issue was never placed before the people of New Haven by the Agency.

"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance!"

MOSES HESS NEEDS A GOOD HOME
Moses is a black, smooth-haired terrier, 1 year old, house trained. He prefers family with children and running space. If interested, call 562-6920 or 787-3131 ext. 8196.

GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, May 28 at 8 P. M.
AIM Office, 241 Orange St.

Discussion of:

THE MOVEMENT - direction for white radicals.

SUMMER OF '68 - what can white people do?

CRISIS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM - what are the alternatives?

'68 ELECTIONS - AIM candidates?

All AIM supporters are urged to come and participate!

HPA LEGAL NOTES

The Hill Parents Association continued its legal offensive April 29 with a $500,000 libel suit against Rep. Robert Giaimo. The HPA suit, filed by New Haven attorney Catherine Roraback, charges that Giaimo made "false and malicious" statements in a WNHC-TV interview January 2.

During the interview, which followed Rep. Giaimo's report criticizing Community Progress, Inc., the local anti-poverty agency, Giaimo said that the HPA "has no respect for law and order," that it "in fact thrive(s) on turmoil," that it "use(s) terroristic tactics such as the throwing of fire bombs," and that it has "extorted money...from various individuals and groups."

The suit charges that because of these comments the HPA's "reputation has been damaged and it has been deprived of its public support to the detriment of its objectives and purposes."

This is the second legal action by black New Haveners in their offense of recent weeks. Arguments on defense motions to dismiss the first suit--an injunction action against Mayor Richard Lee, the New Haven Police Department, and the New Haven newspapers--were heard by Federal Judge M. Joseph Blumenfeld in Hartford April 16. As the AIM Newsletter went to press Judge Blumenfeld had not ruled on the motions to dismiss the suit, which was brought by five HPA members and NAACP president Courtland Wilson.

Elsewhere on the HPA legal front, three charges against the organization president, Fred Harris, were dropped in Circuit Court April 15. The charges--loitering, disorderly conduct, and breach of peace--all stemmed from an incident during last August's disturbances. Mr. Harris pleaded guilty, however, to still another of peace charge, this one from a warrant sworn out by New Haven landlord Morris Sachs, and was fined $25.

Mr. Harris is out of jail pending the appeal of his conviction on a charge of possession of heroin. This appeal like all of Mr. Harris' cases, will be handled by attorney Roraback.

Ronald Johnson and Buddy Bonner, two HPA members convicted in the so-called "bomb plot" in March, are also out of jail pending their appeals, which will be handled by Leonard Boudin and Michael Kennedy of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee in New York.

Expenses for both suits and both appeals will be enormous. Contributions to the HPA Legal Defense Fund should be sent c/o John Wilhelm, Box 1344 Kilby Station, New Haven, 06519.

"The Thaw" - by Andrew Kopkind in *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. X No. 8, April 25, 1968.

The Viet Cong made politics possible again; McCarthy made it thinkable; Kennedy made it seem workable. The importance of the campaign is not that it will solve America's problems, or that either Kennedy or McCarthy will even win - in August or November. But even if they ultimately lose, the political system will have been seen to work. It has produced alternatives, which is its function. The fact that even those alternatives present secondary, not elemental choices, is by and large ignored. Neither Kennedy nor McCarthy will even think of breaking up the concentration of corporate power which is at the heart of America's undemocracy and produces the effects of imperialism and racism which the candidates decry. Neither will move to disengage the power of America from its necessarily domineering role in the world; indeed, both have said that only by ending the war in Vietnam can the country get on with the business of consolidating its power elsewhere. Neither, finally, can it encourage the development of institutions of black unity which, for the moment at least, seem to be the only way for black people to fight the nightmare oppression of racism. What it will take to do all that is a politics independent of a Kennedy or McCarthy or Nixon Administration; radicals have their work cut out.

DRAFT NEWS

4

FROM THE DRAFT ACTION GROUP, 241 ORANGE STREET, 865-4982

Universities

MIT is writing letters to the local boards of 800 graduate students requesting occupational deferments. The students are teaching and research assistants.

Oberlin College successfully protested the punitive reclassification of a student, John Dove, who participated in an anti-draft demonstration. Oberlin banned military recruiting from the campus, and Selective Service restored Mr. Dove's student deferment.

Prospects for Edward Kennedy's draft bill do not look good. Congressman Mendel Rivers does not intend to conduct hearings. The administration could, however, take the heat off graduate students and seniors by changing the order of call. New legistration would not be needed.

Meanwhile, local boards are refusing permission for Yale's Rhodes Scholars to leave the country.

Canada

In 1967 there were 13,000 draft age male immigrants to Canada. According to a story in the New York Times, however, emigration and renunciation of U.S. citizenship may not end an individual's draft problems. One local board refused to grant a non-resident classification to a young man who renounced in Canada. Instead, he received an induction notice and has since been indicted for failure to report.

Resistance and the Courts

Yale resisters Larry Francis, 1970, and Donald Steed, Divinity School, have refused induction. Both were classified IA after turning in their draft cards last October.

The Supreme Court has refused to review the conviction of former Yale student, David Brown. Mr. Brown enlisted in May, 1966, and became a conscientious objector during basic training. He is serving a 21 month sentence at Fort Leavenworth.

In Boston Judge Ford has ruled that Coffin and company may not question the legality of the war. Elsewhere, an appeal by David Mitchell of New Canaan against his five year sentence was refused by the U.S. District Court of Appeals.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN CONNECTICUT

by Craig O'Connell

Absurd is the word that Albert Camus used in portraying the state which incorporates the death penalty into its code of justice. In fact, he proposed that its abolition be the first article of justice established in discovering a new, sane style of life in the twentieth century. Despite this philosopher's efforts, the controversy over capital punishment continues. Proponents, in the face of contradictory evidence, insist that the death penalty is a deterrent to crime. In the meantime more men die at the hands of the state. Yet recently, there has been a definite trend against the enforcement of this penalty. In 1966 one person was executed in the entire country, and in 1967 only two. However, there are only thirteen states in which the death penalty does not exist. Unfortunately, Connecticut is not one of them. In 1963 and 1965 a bill calling for complete abolition was defeated on the floor of the Connecticut General Assembly by a four to one vote.

The main arguments against capital punishment are pragmatic ones. First of all, the death penalty is not a deterrent. Studies by criminologists Thorsten Sellin and Hugo Adam Bedau have demonstrated that trends and incidence of homicide rates are the same in states having similar demographic, economic, and social conditions whether or not they have the death penalty. In other words, the death penalty has no more influence on homicide rates in the states in which it exists than its absence has on homicide rates in comparable states. As the graph shows, homicide rates in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island have for all practical purposes remained consistently the same. Rhode Island abolished the death penalty as far back as 1852. Massachusetts, while retaining the death penalty, has not executed a man in over twenty years. From 1949-53 the British Royal Commission on Capital Punishment extensively reviewed the entire question before submitting the finding that "there is no clear evidence that the abolition of capital punishment has led to an increase in the homicide rate or that its reintroduction has led to a fall." Similar conclusions have also been found by the United Nations Committee on Capital Punishment and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

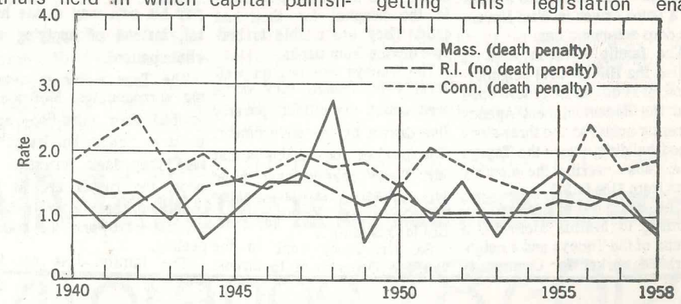
Secondly, human judgment is fallible and the possibility of executing an innocent man is evident. Death is final and irrevocable. In fact, Michigan, Rhode Island, and Maine abolished the death penalty primarily because they had executed innocent men. Just last year the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the case of an Illinois man who spent ten years on Death Row and came within seven hours of execution. Must Connecticut wait for such a tragedy to occur before it is prompted to action?

Another argument is that the death penalty is unconstitutional--against the eighth amendment which forbids inflicting cruel punishment. What can be more cruel than the terror and torture of the period of waiting in despair, knowing the exact day and hour when one's life will be terminated and knowing there is absolutely no exit? Consider only the mental anguish that the condemned man endures in this period of waiting. Execution is indeed an act of terror and violence which degrades and cheapens human life.

Connecticut has the death penalty for murder in the first degree and kidnapping. The last execution in Connecticut was in 1960 when Joseph Taborski, convicted "mad-dog murderer"(New Haven Journal Courier), was the fatal victim of "the people." In the ten year statistical period 1956-57 through 1965-66 there were 47 trials held in which capital punishment was a potential sentence. 42 of the 47 resulted in conviction and two were sentenced to death. The remaining 40 were all given life imprisonment. Of these, 29 were white and 11 black. Today there are two men on Death Row: Arthur Davis and Roberto Delgado. Davis, a black New Haven native, was convicted of killing six people. He was sentenced to die in the electric chair on January 18, 1967 at Somers State Prison. Delgado a Puerto-Rican from Hartford, was convicted of murdering a policeman. He was scheduled to die March 4, 1968. Delgado does not speak a word of English---only the poor are victims of the Chair! Both are appealing their cases.

In an age when rehabilitation is beneficial to both the society and the individual there is no need for such anachronisms as capital punishment. Our society can not expect to develop a sense of respect for the dignity of human life in its members when it sees fit to violate the principle itself. The death penalty serves no purpose. It does not bring the murdered back to life. The logic of the retentionists is merely a loophole for revenge---a publicly regulated substitute for personal revenge.

Individuals opposing the death penalty should write Governor Dempsey urging him to commute the sentences of the two men on death row immediately and to State Representative William Ratchford, 66 West Street, Danbury, Conn. Ratchford is the leading proponent of the abolition movement in the General Assembly. The more people who write, the greater our chances are of getting this legislation enacted!



Crude homicide death rates, per 100,000 population, in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island: 1920–1958.

Just All The Comforts Of Home?

By EUGENIA SHEPPARD

NEW YORK —When Charles Revson finally moves into the Park Avenue triplex apartment that once belonged to Helena Rubinstein, he will be able to turn on a gold plated hot water faucet, hidden under a hand-carved marble shell, and fill his shaped marble bathtub in two minutes flat. He doesn't like to wait.

At the end of his bath he can save at least five minutes of toweling by standing under an infra-ray panel in the ceiling. At the touch of a switch it blows warm, dry air into the room.

At the same time Lyn Revson can be luxuriating in her dressing room with the moldings all picked out in gold leaf and a six-foot-tall revolving shoe tree behind one of the doors. The dressing room with kitchenette and exercise room with sunshine built into the ceiling and the bicycle that Charles Revson rides at least half an hour a day.

Many Marvels

There are so many mechanical marvels in the new Revson apartment, like instant bath water and central air conditioning that the engineers had to build a little house on one of the terraces to take care of the machinery. It looks like the boiler room of the Queen Mary.

Though the Revsons are about to celebrate the second anniversary of the day they bought Madame Rubinstein's penthouse, the moving-in date is now in sight. It will probably be next September.

Already finished is one of the world's most glorious kitchens. "This is my dream, but you can't imagine how ugly it was when we bought it," says Lyn Revson who admits that "whatever I do, I burn."

Her new kitchens (there are several rooms) have floors of terra cotta French tile. Walls are covered with brilliant peacock blue tiles and blue and yellow patterned Portuguese tiles that match the kitchen curtains. Many of the cupboard doors are hammered copper. Naturally there's a lineup of stainless steel spits, broilers, ovens, and iceboxes. Nothing as uncouth as a pilot light ever materializes on the elegant stoves.

Lyn Revson has her silver, glass, and china ready. She bought vermeil service plates and some of the china at Tiffany and she also shopped at Goode when she visited London last week.

"I have two dozen of everything," she says.

Also ready to live in are the rooms decorated for Lyn Revson's three teen-age children. Here twelve-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Susan, will have green and white French toile on the walls, built-in armoires for her clothes and a bathroom done in mint green and white striped tiles. The boys, away at boarding school, will spend their holidays in a wood panelled room with burlap backed bookcases.

Madame Rubinstein's famous Dali room, once filled with Dali's surrealist paintings, has become the Revson family room with the floor covered in plaid vinyl and a plaid vinyl band around the top of the walls.

Though the apartment has 28 rooms, there is actually only one guest room. It's a large one with a palatial bathroom that has a gold-plated wash basin. All the bathrooms are works of art.

The dining room may look untouched, but not at all. Every panel of the fine old boiserie has been taken out and sound proofing has been installed underneath.

The staff quarters are planned and decorated as meticulously as the rest of the apartment. One of the backstairs apartments may be occupied by the new major domo Charles Revson has just hired to take care of all the complicated and time-consuming details of living. Once a steward on the Queen Mary and the Queen Elizabeth, his name is Mr. Grundy. He will arrive soon from England.

Every change in the apartment, every color and bit of fabric, down to the last detail of the hand-carved marble shells that camouflage his bathtub faucets, are Charles Revson's personal choice. That's why so many things are "still in abeyance", as the architect says.

Lyn Revson didn't want the apartment in the beginning, but now things are different.

"It's just comfortable and livable," she says, "and not a bit like what everybody thinks it's going to be."

Aside, Bob Cook discussed poverty in his article "CPI: Anatomy of a Failure" for the AIM Newsletter (Vol. 2, No. 11, Feb. 12, 1968). Using U.S. Bureau of the Census statistics, he pointed out: "The richest 5% receive 17% of the income, while the poorest 20% receive only 3%." These figures also show that the richest 20% receive nearly 45% of the income. Cook further stated; "...there has been no significant change in the distribution of income in the United States since 1900."

PORTIONS OF THE NEW HAVEN REGISTER, SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1968 & MEANWHILE

Kidney Donor's Family Have Their Own Struggle

By ROBERT KILPATRICK
Register Staff Reporter

The Toney family lives at 216 Washington Ave. Mr. and Mrs. Willie J. Toney have five children. Their sixth child, five-year-old Willie, was killed by a hit-and-run driver April 13.

After the accident, young Willie's kidney was transplanted into the body of a nine-year-old boy. Willie's parents consented to the transplant and then faced the problem of paying their little boy's funeral expenses — a problem they have not been able to solve.

Mr. Toney is 28 years old. He came here about 13 years ago from Georgia with a sixth grade education. He earns $100 a week as a truck driver in West Haven. He does not own a car.

The family lives in what is called the Hill Central neighborhood. It is due to be redeveloped and the Redevelopment Agency recently acquired the three-story wood building where the Toneys live, thus lowering the monthly rent from $100 to $75.

The house is a firetrap, according to Mathis McBride, a friend of the Toneys and a neighborhood worker for Community Progress, Inc. It is close to the dwellings at 180, 172, 166 and 169 Washington Ave. that were destroyed in a series of fires April 9.

Herbert R. Scott, the family attorney, described the building as a dump. "It's ready to come down," he said.

Scott and McBride were telling the Toney's story. McBride had been going around the neighborhood trying to raise money from friends of the family to pay for the funeral. They gave as much as they could, but it was not enough.

The Toneys have no savings or insurance. They also have a poor credit rating. Among their bills is one for about $400 owed to the hospital for their last child. They are unable to borrow money from banks.

The Toneys are not on welfare, even though they come well under the official poverty line drawn by the government. The main reason for this is that Mr. Toney doesn't want to go on welfare. He is making enough to provide the necessities for his family.

So, Mr. Toney went to the Welfare Department to discuss assistance, possibly in the form of a loan. McBride said he was turned down because he has a regular job.

Mr. Toney has worked for the trucking firm for about nine months. There is no union there, so he does not receive the high wages usually associated with truck driving.

He has tried in the past to get a truck-driving job with a union outfit, but each time he has done so, he has been laid off just before he would have become a union member.

One reason the Toneys owe so much money is that his employer does not provide CMS or Blue Cross. And, according to McBride, Mr. Toney wanted to pay his own way at the hospital, instead of applying as a clinic patient.

The Toneys live in depressing surroundings. McBride described their third-floor apartment as "clean but lousy." He said they lack furniture and beds, the rooms are in poor condition, the plaster is falling off the walls and the paint is peeling.

The family does not know when their house will be torn down, nor do they know where the Redevelopment Agency will relocate them, or how much the new rent will cost.

"Mr. and Mrs. Toney are prime examples of self-help, self-pride and self-determination in action," Scott observed.

And their housing situation, he continued, is an example of decent people stuck in a building that the Redevelopment Agency is about to tear down. Due to the shortage of housing in New Haven, he said, there are very few places the Toneys can afford to live in.

Mrs. Toney emphasized that the use of her son's kidney for a white boy was not a racial situation. It was a human response. "We wanted the boy to live," she said, referring to the recipient.

The couple was reluctant to publicize their problems. "Mr. Toney definitely does not want to beg," McBride said.

But, Scott pointed out, the Toneys continue to live in their ghetto apartment. And, McBride added, "Their situation is similar to that of many other families in the Hill."

In his article entitled "Poverty", for the Encyclopedia Americana, Sargent Shriver (former director of OEO) said: "Do the rich get a larger share of the total income in the United States than in other countries? Many Europeans think they do, perhaps remembering sensational stories about the luxurious living of American millionaires. But this is not true..."

HILL MODEL CITIES NEIGHBORHOOD CORP.

The Hill Neighborhood Corporation can mean a new chance for the people of the Hill. It can also be just another neighborhood group, claiming to speak for all the Hill but really representing just a few people. For it to work people must come to meetings, organize their neighbors, and become aware of the important issues that will mean life or death for the Hill as a decent neighborhood.

The Hill Neighborhood Corporation (HNC) is structured so that, if people work hard in it, it will represent our real needs. The most important things to remember about about the HNC are:

1. Every resident of the Hill 16 years of age and older can be a member.

2. All important decisions will be made in mass neighborhood meetings in which all members can vote. People must attend these meetings and understand the issues.

3. Between neighborhood meetings the Board of Directors will be responsible for the work of the HNC. This Board of Directors will be composed one-half of representatives of Hill organizations, and one-half of residents elected from different geographical sections of the Hill.

The HNC's first big job will be to hire a staff - architects, neighborhood workers, whoever else is needed - to plan for Model Cities in the Hill. The HNC will receive a $105,000.00 "planning grant" from Washington to do this job.

The story of Model Cities in the Hill really begins in April 1967, when about 250 residents came to a so-called "public hearing" at Lee High School, chaired by Development Administrator Melvin Adams and now-resigned CPI Executive Director Lawrence Spitz.

That meeting made it obvious that redevelopment and CPI were not interested in giving Hill people any real voice in deciding what Model Cities would do. The Hill, Adams and Spitz said, was picked as New Haven's Model Cities neighborhood in the city's application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Washington. There was a lot of the usual talk about "citizen participation", but nobody would answer the one question everybody at the meeting asked: "Will we be able to decide what happens to our neighborhood under Model Cities, or will somebody downtown decide?" As usual, Adams and company had no acceptable answer, and the meeting ended with the residents totally disgusted.

After that fiasco, nobody ever asked the neighborhood what it thought again. The application for money to plan the Model Cities program was filed, and in November it was approved. HUD said, however, that the way in which neighborhood people would take part in planning had to be improved.

That upset city officials. So that Adams could make believe Hill residents had some real part in it, he appeared at a meeting called by the Hill Inter-Agency Council in early February with a small group of "representatives" of neighborhood organizations. The rest of the community wasn't even invited. This meeting was perhaps the starting point for the idea of the Hill Neighborhood Corporation, and for the important victory the neighborhood won when the Board of Aldermen approved our plan for Model Cities.

It was clear at the first meeting that many residents of the Hill were tired of "neighborhood participation" that didn't mean anything. Upon the demands of some Hill residents there, various city agencies produced enough money to hire neighborhood workers for a four-week period. The Hill Citizens Ad Hoc Model Cities Steering Committee was formed by volunteers from the first meetings as a temporary group that would organize the neighborhood meetings and hire and supervise the neighborhood workers.

The goal was to bring the discussion of Model Cities out into the community where it belonged, to tell people about it and get our ideas about how it should work and what it should do. A series of six meetings was organized in different parts of the Hill so neighbors could get together in small groups to discuss the program. Because of the language difference there was one meeting conducted at Prince St. School in Spanish for the Puerto Rican residents.

The final meeting was held at Lee High School on April 16, conducted in English and Spanish for all Hill people. It was at this meeting that

(cont. on p.2)

AIM a special issue for the Hill of:
THE BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT
24 | orange 787-0123

the idea of the Hill Neighborhood Corporation was established and unanimously approved by the more than 250 community residents that attended.

It has never been a secret that Hill residents were no longer satisfied with just participating in a program if we didn't have any power to control what it actually did. As the neighborhood workers went from door to door in the neighborhood and as people started coming to the local meetings this dissatisfaction was found to be widespread among all segments of the community.

People around Congress Ave. are tired of getting pushed around by the Redevelopment Agency, the people in City Point need recreation area for their children, and families on Vernon St. are worried about having their homes turned into parking lots for the hospital. All through the streets of the Hill people voiced their needs and the needs of the neighborhood.

The problems were not new, and people could not understand why all fancy new city programs just made the problems worse and not better - ''I mean, don't those people downtown understand that my family can't sleep on the Oak St. Connector?

This talk went on in the streets, homes and meetings, but there was no way of letting the politicians know. To make public the position of the neighborhood, the Steering Committee wrote a petition that could be presented to the city officials. The neighborhood workers took it into the streets and the meetings and after three weeks over 1400 Hill residents had signed it. The petition said:

''We, the undersigned residents of the Hill, believe that a majority of the members of the Model Cities Agency which controls the Model Cities Programs should be Hill residents selected in a manner approved by the citizens of the Hill.''

At the same time the petition was being passed around the neighborhood, the Urban Development Committee of the Board of Aldermen had submitted two proposals, a majority and minority report, for how the Model Cities Agency should be set up. Neither of the proposals incorporated the idea endorsed by the neighborhood petition. Instead they put the decision-making power for the Hill program in the hands of non-Hill residents or residents appointed by outsiders. Since the aldermen's proposals did not represent the ideas of the residents, the Steering Committee decided to make up its own proposal as an alternative.

The neighborhood proposal was in two parts. The first was that the Model Cities Agency to be made up of 21 members, 11 of them residents of the Hill chosen by the people of the Hill, the other 10 members chosen by other involved city groups.

The second and most important part was the formation of the Hill Neighborhood Corporation, which would be responsible for choosing the 11 representatives from the Hill and for supervising the $105,000.00 ''planning grant'' from HUD. For the first time in New Haven, none of this planning money will go to the Redevelopment Agency.

The idea of the Neighborhood Corporation is that all organizations and individuals of the Hill should have a voice in deciding who the neighborhood representatives to the Model Cities should be and how the neighborhood should conduct its own business. It was finally decided at the all-neighborhood meeting on April 16 that basic to the corporation would be the provision that anyone who lived in the Hill and was 16 years of age or older could belong to it.

The Board of Directors of the corporation will be composed one-half of representatives of Hill organizations and one half of people elected from different areas in the Hill. The Board of Directors will be responsible for money that the Corporation receives and for the appointment of the 11 Hill representatives to the Model Cities Agency. The general membership will vote and have the final say on all important decisions of the corporation.

Because the Corporation is only a couple of weeks old there are still a lot of details to be worked out. Attorney Roger Koontz of the Legal Assistance Association is working hard to help the By-laws and Nominating Committees which were elected by Hill residents at the April 16 meeting.

Once the committees decide on rules and an election procedure for the corporation, they will present their ideas to an open organizational meeting where it will have to be voted on. All committees of the Hill Neighborhood Corporation are open to any member who wishes to join, and everyone will have an equal vote.

The Corporation can only be made to work through the combined efforts of the Hill residents. We have let the Redevelopment Agency and the people downtown make the decisions about our neighborhood for too long. There is not much left of the Hill - vacant lots appear every day - but the only way it can be saved is if we unite together, from City Point to Legion Ave.

If we let only a few of our neighbors take care of the Corporation business we will suffer, for once it has started it will not run automatically. To be effective the Corporation needs the active support of all the Hill people - those that have been here twenty years and those that have lived here for six months.

It is very important to the Neighborhood Corporation that all those who live in the Hill and are 16 years of age and older may participate. In only a few years the neighborhood will belong to those children and teenagers who are now in school, and like the rest of us they should have a voice in the decisions of the neighborhood.

The problems of the Hill cannot be ignored. It has suffered from highways, redevelopment and riot. Areas where people lived have been replaced by parking lots, roads and vacant lots. Children that were five years old in the middle '50's when redevelopment in the Hill started have been forced to move five or six or seven times since then, and now we wonder why they break windows when they are fifteen.

As Mayor Lee had brought the concrete department stores to downtown, he has destroyed the small business areas of Legion Ave. and Washington Ave., streets that were once thriving with business late into the evening. The Hill is a neighborhood for people to live and work and shop - not a parking lot for Yale, Macy's and Malley's.

It is not just a problem for the black person on Congress Ave., the Puerto Rican on Cedar St., or the white homeowner in City Point. The neighborhood belongs to all of us and what happens to each of us affects the other. Nobody is saying that it is going to be easy to solve the problems of the neighborhood - it will probably be very hard.

The experience of the Model Cities Steering Committee can be useful to all of us. Its members came from all segments of the community, black, white and Puerto Rican, members of the Hill Parents Association, Kimberly Ave. P.T.A., landlords and an Irish priest. People from all over the Hill came together and worked for the neighborhood.

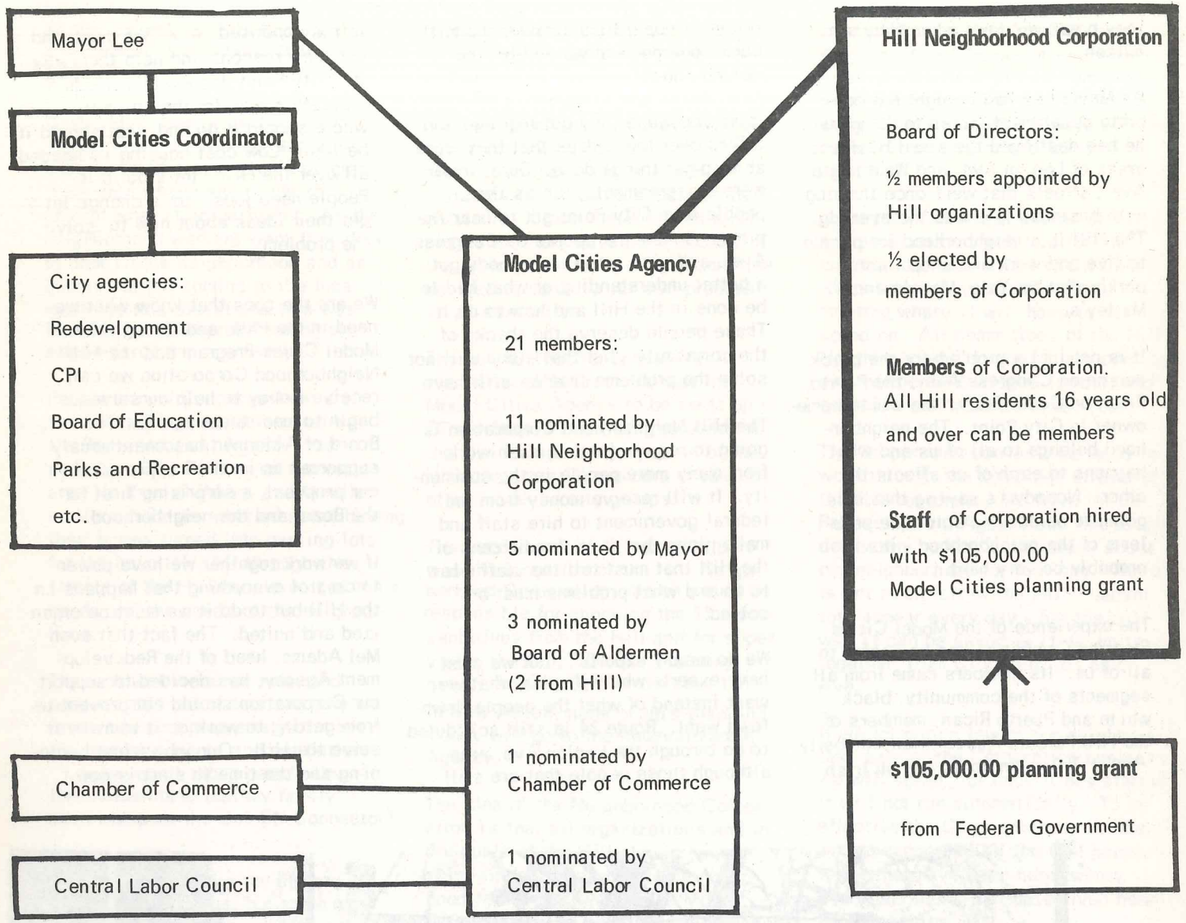
It was because they got together and talked over their ideas that they were able to get things done. Sure, there were disagreements, but as the people from City Point got to hear the problems from the people on Congress Ave., and vice versa, everybody got a better understanding of what had to be done in the Hill and how to do it. These people deserve the thanks of the community - but that alone will not solve the problems that we still have.

The Hill Neighborhood Corporation is going to require just as much work from many more people in the community. It will receive money from the federal government to hire staff and make plans, but it is the citizens of the Hill that must tell the staff what to do and what problems must be solved.

We do need ''experts'', but we must have experts who will plan what we want instead of what the people downtown want. Route 34 is still scheduled to go through the Legion Ave. area although those people that are still left are opposed to it. We must find out their reasons and help them stop it. City Point desperately needs a recreation area for the children - where should it go and what should it be like? Low cost housing is needed all over the Hill - let's build it. People need jobs - for a change let's get their ideas about how to solve the problem.

We are the ones that know what we need in the Hill, and through the Model Cities Program and the Hill Neighborhood Corporation we can receive money to help ourselves begin to meet these needs. The Board of Aldermen has unanimously supported us in their approval of our proposal, a surprising first for the Board and the neighborhood.

If we work together we have power to control everything that happens in the Hill but to do it we must be organized and united. The fact that even Mel Adams, head of the Redevelopment Agency, has decided to support our Corporation should not prevent us from getting to work on it to make it serve the Hill. Our job is just beginning and the time to start is now.


Mayor Lee
Model Cities Coordinator
City agencies:
Redevelopment
CPI
Board of Education
Parks and Recreation
etc.
Model Cities Agency
21 members:
11 nominated by Hill Neighborhood Corporation
5 nominated by Mayor
3 nominated by Board of Aldermen (2 from Hill)
1 nominated by Chamber of Commerce
1 nominated by Central Labor Council
Chamber of Commerce
Central Labor Council
Hill Neighborhood Corporation
Board of Directors:
½ members appointed by Hill organizations
½ elected by members of Corporation
Members of Corporation.
All Hill residents 16 years old and over can be members
Staff of Corporation hired with $105,000.00 Model Cities planning grant
$105,000.00 planning grant
from Federal Government

This chart shows the structure for the Model Cities Program in the Hill. This plan was put together by the Hill Citizens Ad Hoc Model Cities Steering Committee, unanimously approved by the neighborhood - wide meeting at Lee High School April 16, unanimously approved by the Board of Aldermen April 18, and signed by Mayor Richard C. Lee May 1.

1. The **Hill Neighborhood Corporation**, which anyone in the Hill 16 years old or over can join, is the most important part of this plan. If the Corporation is to succeed, all the people of the Hill - whites, blacks, and Puerto Ricans from the different parts of the neighborhood - must work together in it to decide what their neighborhood needs. To help do this the Neighborhood Corporation will get $105,000.00 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington to hire the neighborhood's own architects, planners, neighborhood workers, and whatever else is needed to help plan for Model Cities.

2. Mayor Lee will appoint a **Model Cities Coordinator** for the city. He will make sure all the various agencies - Redevelopment, CPI, the Board of Education, the Department of Parks and Recreation, etc. - work together to help the Model Cities program.

3. The **Model Cities Agency** is made up of 21 members: 11 residents of the Hill nominated by the Hill Neighborhood Corporation, 5 representatives nominated by Mayor Lee, 3 by the Board of Aldermen (2 from the Hill), 1 by the Chamber of Commerce, and 1 by the Central Labor Council. This Agency has the final say about all major decisions for the Model Cities program. It will coordinate the efforts of city agencies, business, labor, and the people of the Hill.

The basic idea of this complicated structure is that the people of the Hill must have their own organization and their own staff, so that they do not have to depend on city agencies like Redevelopment to make all the plans.

The Hill Neighborhood Corporation will make the neighborhood's own plans, the city agencies will make their plans for the Hill, and the Model Cities Agency in the middle will help the neighborhood and the city to work together.

victory with the aldermen

All five aldermen from the Hill were present and voting when the Board of Aldermen voted 27-0 for the Model Cities proposal put together by the Hill Citizens Ad Hoc Model Cities Steering Committee. They are Aldermen George Cahill (also a member of the Steering Committee), Victor DeCarlo, Blaze Garbatini, J. Peter Lynch, and Vincent Mauro.

The unanimous vote by the New Haven Board of Aldermen for the Hill neighborhood's Model Cities proposal was an important victory. It also came as a complete surprise, even to those who had worked so hard since February with the Hill Citizens Ad Hoc Model Cities Steering Committee.

No one really thought the aldermen would approve the Steering Committee's plan, and certainly no one thought it would get unanimous approval. Yet when the aldermen voted during the tense, late-night special meeting on April 18 - two days before a deadline set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Washington - the final tally was 27-0. What happened?

Credit for the victory belongs to the hard work of the Steering Committee, the neighborhood workers it supervised, Attorney Roger Koontz of the Legal Assistance Association, and the neighborhood people who turned out to the meetings to discuss the program. That process is described elsewhere in this special issue.

The plan developed by the Steering Committee out of all this neighborhood work makes it at least possible that Hill people can make their own decisions for a change, but there were a lot of hurdles to clear. Fortunately, the Board of Aldermen has begun this year to wake up to the fact that all of Mayor Lee's famous programs - which they had been rubber-stamping for years - were not, after all, solving the problems. Some of the aldermen had even begun to figure out that Redevelopment was actually making the housing situation worse, instead of better.

The aldermen said as early as February that they would not accept the proposal by Mayor Lee and Adams, which would have simply given the $105,000.00 planning grant to city officials and let them make all the plans, as usual.

The Urban Development Committee of the Board of Aldermen produced two plans for the Model Cities Agency, which will make all major decisions for the program. The Committee's majority report had a 15 member Agency, of whom five were Hill residents, all appointed by the aldermen. The minority report proposed a 21 member Agency, including six Hill people elected in ward elections and five appointed by the aldermen.

Some of the aldermen who were sincerely interested in giving the neighborhood more power in Model Cities thought that these proposals were the best ones that could get through the Board. Although both were better than the Redevelopment Agency's plan, the Steering Committee felt neither gave the neighborhood enough influence to make any real difference. The people the neighborhood workers talked to, and those who came to the Hill meetings, agreed.

There were two main objections Even in the minority report, which had an 11-10 majority of Hill people, only six were actually elected by the neighborhood. The other 15 Model Cities Agency members were to be appointed by outsiders, and the Hill is clearly tired of having its ''leaders'' and its ''planners'' selected for it by someone else.

More importantly, neither of these plans took the planning money away from the Redevelopment Agency. The Steering Committee felt that nothing would be changed if the same old people downtown controlled the planning. Neighborhood people know they need the help of ''experts'' – especially architects, planners, accountants – but they know they must have experts who are responsible to the people. not some outside force.

The residents at the neighborhood-wide meeting at Lee High School April 16 agreed, and they unanimously supported the Steering Committee's alternate plan. This plan is detailed elsewhere in this special issue; basically, it says the $105,000 planning grant would go to the new Hill Neighborhood Corporation (HNC),

(cont. on p. 6)

which is designed to represent all the people of the Hill. The HNC would also appoint 11 of the 21 members of the Model Cities Agency.

Three aldermen - Alan Lessler, William Rees, and Aaron Aronow - attended the April 16 neighborhood meeting. Alderman Lessler was asked if he would take the plan to the Board meeting two nights later and try to get it passed. He said yes, but nobody really thought it could be done.

The next two days brought a lot of hard work. Many members of the Steering Committee contacted aldermen and talked the plan over with them. Some AIM members who had gotten to know aldermen during the nearly-successful fight over State Street redevelopment were helpful in explaining the proposal. A big chunk of the credit belongs to the Steering Committee's lawyer, Roger Koontz, who worked hard with Aldermen Lessler and other members of the Board to work out the details of the legislation

It was clear by Thursday, the night of the special meeting on Model Cities, that Adams and the Redevelopment Agency would put up with an 11-10 Hill majority on the Model Cities Agency, but they were dead set against giving more than a token amount of the planning money to the HNC. Adams has never believed average people could make intelligent decisions about their own neighborhood, and he wasn't about to give the Hill a chance to try it.

As the aldermen went into their caucus (real decisions on the all-Democratic Board are made in the party caucus, not on the floor) nobody thought that the HNC would get the planning grant, even though this was absolutely necessary to the Steering Committee's plan. As the aldermen came downstairs to take their public vote, however, Adams found out that they had decided to approve the entire plan, including the money for the HNC.

Adams, visibly upset, argued with the aldermen in front of the chamber doors as they tried to file in for the vote. He told them that HUD would never approve giving the entire $105,000.00 to the HNC, that New Haven might lose the whole Model Cities program if they did it. This last-ditch stand by Adams was an amazing scene to the Hill people gathered there for the vote. He held out to the bitter end against neighborhood control.

Fortunately, the aldermen resisted this pressure. After Alderman Alan Lessler read the amendments proposed by the Steering Committee, he said that "This is going to be the Hill planning for the Hill...I think those who feel that the little fellow in the street cannot plan what he needs to have planned and needs other people to plan for him are wrong....This amendment indicates all of the money will go to the Hill Neighborhood Corporation. We are obliged to do it in many ways. Many other programs have failed. We are going to give the people a chance for them to explore ideas, to develop ideas and plan. We are going to go all the way with them. There should not be any question."

Alderman William Lee Miller, a great fan of Mayor Lee's Redevelopment program, made one last try at diverting the planning money by asking Alderman Lessler three questions: "Will it meet the specific standards of Federal Model Cities law? Will the city lose the Model Cities grant as a result of this amendment motion? Can you, Alderman Lessler, assure me that it will not result in the loss of the entire grant?"

Lessler replied that "There is something very wrong with our Federal Government, if a plan like this is not accepted. People can plan their own program. I am at a loss to see an agency of the government reject a plan because we have given every penny of the plan to the people to plan....Our vote will be passed on an article of faith."

Alderman Bartholomew Guida supported Lessler, saying "I don't think that we should attempt to place a responsibility for any future action...on the shoulders of one of our colleagues. I think we take whatever action we are becoming involved in tonight collectively... The terms of this Board have been that it will share its responsibilities, or will ask representatives from the Hill to assume a grave responsibility, if this is to work out as a model program; if we can prove to other communities in the program that grass roots can

(cont. on p.7)

What is "Model Cities"?

The "Model Cities" program is essentially an admission by the federal government that existing urban renewal and war-on-poverty programs are failing to meet the needs of the urban crisis. The program has three general goals:

1. Greater coordination between governments (federal, state, municipal), agencies (public and private), and private enterprise, concerned with urban problems, and concentration of their resources in one area as a demonstration.

2. Grants for new and innovative proposals over and above existing renewal and poverty programs.

3. Greater citizen participation in the planning and running of new and existing programs and projects.

In the language of the federal guidelines, the "Model Cities" program is designed to rebuild slum areas, expand housing stock, particularly for low-income families, expand job opportunities, reduce dependence on welfare, improve schools and school curriculum, combat disease and ill health, reduce crime, improve recreational and cultural facilities, and improve transportation. In other words, the same old liberal cornucopia with a larger dose of free enterprise and lip service to citizen participation.

The federal government usually pays from 66% - 90% of the existing programs. The new financial incentive of the "Model Cities" program would be grants of up to 80% of the non-federal share of the existing programs to fund new programs. In New Haven's first application for the "Model Cities" program, they listed $3.8 million worth of poverty programs in the Hill, of which the non-federal share is $1.3 million. The urban renewal program is worth approximately $18 million, of which the non-federal share is $6 million. The Model Cities program could get 80% of the non-federal share, or $5.8 million in grants for new programs or plans developed by the Hill Neighborhood Corporation and the existing agencies.

Members of the Hill Citizens Ad Hoc Model Cities Steering Committee

Willie Counsel, Chairman
Mrs. Margaret Schulze, Secretary
William Ambrogio
Alderman George Cahill
Theodore Coleman
Celestino Cordova
Mrs. Louis Greene
Fred Harris
Harry Jefferys
Father David MacDonald
Pedro Melendez
Mrs. Shirley Penn
Mark Ramadei
Sal Ruotolo
John Wilhelm
Lawyer for the Committee was Roger Koontz of the Legal Assistance Association.

This special issue of the AIM Newsletter was produced by David Dickson of 7 Sylvan Ave. and Henry Tamarin and John Wilhelm of 216 Washington Ave. PHOTO CREDITS: David Dickson p. 3, p. 5; Richard Stoops, p.7, p.8

WHAT THEY SAY...

These are comments by three of the people who worked hard on the Hill Citizens Ad Hoc Model Cities Steering Committee:

Pedro Melendez, a worker for the Spanish Center on Howard Ave. says: "It's a great thing that happened in the Hill. For the first time people have been given an opportunity to plan their own lives. Model Cities can't work without resident participation."

Father David MacDonald, of St. Peter's Parish on Kimberly Ave., says: "If progress is going to be made, if solutions are going to be found, people must work together to reach these solutions. The Neighborhood Corporation is a means to accomplish communication between people. The Hill has the potential of being an example of person to person communication helping to build a community where people can live. I strongly urge meaningful participation in the Hill Neighborhood Corporation by all residents."

Fred Harris, President of the Hill Parents Association on Congress Ave. says, "I'm very pessimistic about the political thing. I think it's good though if the community can accomplish the things it wants to do."

VICTORY cont.

become effective in model cities planning."

Then J. Peter Lynch put in a supporting word as a Hill alderman: "I am aware of the diverse groups in the area. The Ad Hoc Committee, a cross section of the Hill, should be congratulated for their time and effort...The Hill area will not let the Board down."

After other favorable comments by Aldermen Leander Gray and Aaron Aronow, Majority Leader Anthony P. (Pat) Ambrogio paid tribute to Alderman Lessler's work: "I congratulate my colleague on his raw act of courage. Alan Lessler took courage to put this thing together and to stand up and pour out his heart to the Board. This expresses complete confidence in people. I am completely encouraged by it and by the conduct of the members of the Board."

Then the vote: 27 Yes, 0 No.

The scene after the Board adjourned was jubilant. Hill people rushed around the room, congratulating each other, thanking Alderman Lessler for his vital role, thanking all the aldermen, asking each other if it had really happened. "What's the catch?" Steering Committee members kept asking each other, which shows how far New Haven has gotten from real democratic control: nobody could quite believe the people of the Hill had finally gotten a chance.

Steering Committee members found out later that Alderman Lessler was the key man. He just refused to give up on any part of the plan, even though the odds seemed impossible. Many others were crucial too. Leander Gray, a black alderman from Dixwell, and George Cahill, an Irishman from the Hill, gave the key speeches in the private caucus upstairs. Majority Leader Pat Ambrogio, who grew up in the Hill and still operates Brodie Restaurant Supply on Congress Ave., lent his absolutely necessary support. So did enough others to approve the plan by a narrow margin in the caucus - only two votes, some sources said.

Adams' last stand seems to have brought about the unanimous vote. Some aldermen

(cont. on p.8)

VICTORY cont.

said privately that his doorway effort swung half a dozen votes over to the neighborhood's side. The rest - even William Lee Miller - switched their votes to make it 27-0. That seemed the only politic thing to do, since nobody wants to be branded as opposing the people if he can help it.

Although Adams was skeptical the next day, by Monday he sent a letter to the New York regional office of HUD saying that he and Mayor Lee backed the plan and hoped HUD approved it. And on May 1 the Mayor signed the proposal and formally presented it to HUD.

The only obstacle remaining as the AIM Newsletter went to press was final approval in Washington, and Steering Committee chairman Willie Counsel seemed to have gotten the full backing of Adams in getting that. The signs were that since the neighborhood, the aldermen, and the Mayor all backed the plan, and the Mayor promised "full cooperation" in making Model Cities succeed, HUD would approve it.

The real work, of course, has just begun. Many city officials and aldermen are skeptical that the people of the Hill can really work together and plan intelligently, or that they can work out any better relationship between people and "experts" than the Redevelopment Agency has been able to do. The Hill Neighborhood Corporation, which was being organized as this newsletter went to press, can fall flat on its face - as many people expect and some hope - or it can be the first step in returning real democracy, real decision-making power, to the people of New Haven's neighborhoods.

It could all fail. Racial tensions in the Hill in the past have been dangerously high. The city and the business community still have, of course, far more power and resources than the Hill people. But this first victory paved the way for what could be an exciting effort. It was exciting to see the diverse kinds of people on the Steering Committee work together so well, and it was an exciting victory in the Board of Aldermen.

It is a good beginning.

If you want to subscribe to the AIM Newsletter regularly, write to:

AIM Newsletter
241 Orange Street
New Haven, Conn. 06510

circle one:

$2 subscription
$5 subscription
more $
free subscription

Name
Street
City zip

Enclosed is a check for $

BLACK WOMEN'S BOYCOTT

Since April 10 the Black Women of Greater New Haven have been leading a general boycott of all white-owned and operated stores in the city of New Haven. The boycott will continue, according to the group, until the conditions of the boycott are met: 1) the white business community as a whole must get together and formulate action proposals on the wide range of problems that confront the Black Community; 2)these proposals must be taken to the Black Coalition; 3) the Black Coalition will take these proposals to the Black community as a whole, where they will be accepted or rejected; 4) a definite timetable for action on the accepted proposals must be worked out.

AIM supports the Boycott completely and urges all New Haven residents and shoppers to participate in it. It is especially important that participants inform the white businesses they usually patronize (particularly the large stores downtown) of their ntention to boycott.

In a recent interview three members of the Black Sisters, the steering committee of the Black Women of Greater New Haven, urther explained the purposes and aims of the Boycott. The spokesmen were Mrs. Joan Thornell (Chairman), Mrs. Barbara Louis, and Mrs. Rosemarie Harris.

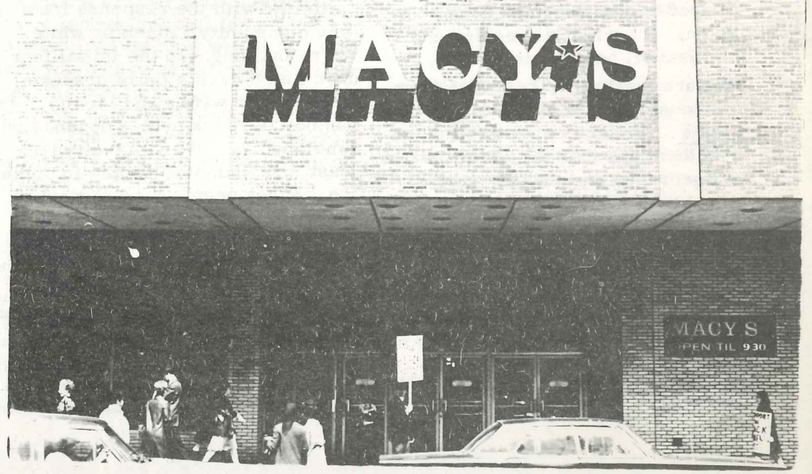
Origins: The boycott grew out of the feeling in the days immediately following the assassination of Dr. King that "now was the time for enormous change in the city and the lives of Black people in the city and the only way to bring about change was to put pressure on people with power in the city." In a speech on the Green, Mrs. Joan Thornell said "we must shut off our dollars." "At the time I meant it emotionally--you've got to pay some dues now. But I also really meant it. We've got to have some change now or we'll have no country." A group of women responded: Mrs. Claudine Crosby from Newhallville, President of United Newhall Organization, Mrs. Francis Revill of Hudson Street, Mrs. Isabelle Russell of the Dixwell Area, Mrs. Rosemarie Harris, HPA, Mrs. Jan Parker of Wooster Square, wife of the chairman of the Black Coalition, Mrs. Ruth Wilson, the wife of the president of the NAACP, Mrs. Constance Copeland of the Fairhaven Parents Ministry, Mrs. Hattie Hill of Hamden, Mrs. Frances Barros of Hamden, Mrs. Joan Thornell of Operation Breakthrough and the HPA, Mrs. Barbara Louis, teacher at the Conte School. Other women who came together in the Black Women of Greater New Haven include Mrs. Alodoyle Anthony, Mrs. Estelle Bell, Mrs. Frances Cunningham, Mrs. Mabel Handy, Mrs. Allison Lobo, Mrs. Willa Mae Madden, Mrs. Doris Morrison, Mrs. Leola Shaw and Mrs. Joanne Strother. Women from all backgrounds women from all over the city came to join the Black Women's Boycott.

The Black Sisters: The governing body, directing the boycott, includes Mrs. Joan Thornell--chairman; Mrs. Claudine Crosby--co-ordinator Mrs. Barbara Louis, public relations officer, and the following four: Mrs. Rosemarie Harris, Mrs. Frances Revill, Mrs. Isabel Russell, Mrs. Althea Tyson. The Secretary is Mrs. Elizabeth Haywood, the second Secretary Miss Christine Moye, the 13 Treasurer Mrs. Emily LaFrazier, the Assistant Treasurer Mrs. Frances Barros.

The Black Coalition: The Black Coalition formed originally when Fred Harris was arrested in October, and includes neighborhood groups in the Hill, in Dixwell, West Haven, Hamden, Newhallville and Fair Haven. The Black Coalition is an "umbrella group" of individuals and groups, and is broadly representative of the total Black community. "The only Black folk that would object to the Coalition are the hasbeens." The white business community is being asked to come forward and present action plans to the Black community through the Black Coalition.

Why Boycott? "This is what the businessman understands--the Almighty Dollar. We're not interested anymore in anybody's minds and hearts. We're trying to get their attention by hurting them where we know it will hurt--in the pocketbook." This is a "new kind" of boycott, without the kind of specific demands usually set out in boycotts. "The only special demand is that the white business community, acting as a group, step forward with comprehensive action proposals designed to remedy a wide range of problems in the Black community: education, housing, jobs, health, economic development. We know that white people know what

cont. p. 14



boycott cont.

the problems are because they created them. There are enough studies--white people's research, conferences, reports--in which is laid out what is necessary to bring justice to the country. Recognizing the inadequacy of these reports, we feel they should use them to start to deal with the problems."

What is the Boycott? "The most visible but not most important activity is picketing--most important for making witness. Certainly the boycott as we see it involves education of the Black and white community. One of the jobs it is doing is casting white businessmen as a group. We don't think the Chamber of Commerce is representative. We are interested in white business as a group--small businesses as well as large."

"The idea of the boycott is getting people not to buy--urging them to buy Black. Picketing is only one phase. The withholding of dollars will make the boycott. We're not getting in a numbers game--whether we have two pickets out or ten or two hundred. It's important that people know that the boycott is directed against white businesses--the white business that controls the country. The business of America is white business. People misunderstand the aims of the boycott. The aims are very clear. They know what the problems are. They just want a way out. The Chamber of Commerce said they would try to provide 1700 jobs. The headlines said promise. Meaningful jobs are not included--jobs you could hang your life on. It's window dressing and tokenism all over again."

"We are looking for response from businessmen in terms of action proposals. We don't want to sit down with them and explain. They are intelligent men and they know what it's about. We won't insult their intelligence by explaining to them and we won't make specific proposals. We want to stress that the problems posed by the boycott are perfectly clear--we're not buying their feigned ignorance."

Is the boycott aimed at all white businesses? "People ask us about busses. The question people should ask is, is that a white business? If the answer is 'yes,' then boycott it."

What can whites do? "We accept white help. But this is one thing that's very different about this movement. Black Power has come to New Haven. and white people must understand right from the giddyap that the leaders are Black and that they are to follow. White people can help with picketing, telephoning, babysitting and transportation. We feel that no longer will we flagellate white people." "We have a speakers bureau set up and if a white group wants a speaker they will have a white speaker whom we have selected because they as individuals support the aims and tactics of the boycott and speak out in personal witness not as messengers from the black community. We will speak to Black groups. We're not in the flagellation business, we're in the boycott business. People can turn in their charge cards, pay their bills but cut off their business. This also hits the businessmen in the pocketbook. People can call businesses to say that they are sympathetic with the Black Women's Boycott and won't do business until the boycott is ended, and the boycott won't be called off until the Black community is satisfied that the white business community has satisfied the conditions of the boycott. If not, the boycott goes on."

What has been the response of the Black community? "We're never satisfied with the response from any community, Black or white. We're building. In the initial four days there were a lot of graduate students and wives and faculty. The number of Black people depends on time and day. We've involved at least three hundred people in picketing. Black people have to work--including Black women. We've enjoyed great support from working Black women--not on the picket lines but in the office. The indelible stamp we've made is that action and policies are determined by Black women. We started as an ad hoc group but we will be increasingly a city-wide action group that will have city-wide or neighborhood-directed programs we deem vital."

"Social justice will come to New Haven. Change has got to come or we're dead."

How has the white community responded? "A lot of white people, who are supposed to be semi-enlightened, have said that we will be polarizing the community or turning off businessmen who have been trying to do things. We're not in the boycott to make people comfortable. A positive response by white businesses is in their own best interest. White businessmen who are "good guys" need only encourage the other white businessmen to act."

Nationwide action: "We notified SCLC and Abernathy sent the following telegram:

> Strongly support your continuing tradition using weapon of Martin Luther King to try to improve conditions of Black People in New Haven, Connecticut. God bless you.
>
> Ralph D. Abernathy, Pres.
> Southern Christian Leadership Council

"Our hope throughout is that people pick up this kind of focus. Other forms are outmoded. Other ways of dealing with Black problems don't work. At this particular time in New Haven there are many climates that are changing--the political, the social too. But we're interested in the economic one because people understand that best and all else derives from that."

"The hour glass has been screwed down to the table."

HILLHOUSE OFFICIAL BLAMES POLICE

That old standby - the charge of conspiracy - is now being used against New Haven High School students. On Thursday, May 2, the day of the two-hour teachers' strike, fifty four junior and senior high students were arrested for misde meanors. Some students arranged a meeting with Mayor Lee for Friday, May 3, to discuss amnesty for the fifty four. The meeting was called off when the students did not show up. They could not get to the meeting since many of them were among the eleven arrested late Thursday night and early Friday morning and charged with conspiracy to commit arson. Over the weekend eleven more were arrested for a total of twenty two. Hugh Price, the newly appointed Director of Heritage House which acts as the steering committee for the Black Coalition, reports that all twenty two are out on bond. On Thursday, May 9, the students' cases were continued. The AIM Newsletter will report the story of the trial. We print here Assistant Principal Robert Pleasure's courageous statement on the incident of Thursday morning May 2.

Statement by Robert Pleasure, Special Assistant to Hillhouse High School, Friday, May 3, 1968

I am disturbed at the way in which events at Hillhouse High School were handled on Thursday morning and disgusted over the manner in which those events were reported in the press and on television. I would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight.

As students arrived at school they were instructed to proceed to the auditorium where attendance was to be taken and instructions given regarding the activities of the day. Because we had some 30 of 98 teachers on hand a plan had been organized to provide a number of seminars and programs for the students present with community resource people. All students, black and white, were slowly moving into the auditorium, but they were moving.

When we did get the students into the auditorium, I began to explain to them the procedure for the day. I told them that if they came to school for learning we had a meaningful program planned, but if they came for fun, they should not be there. A goodly percentage of the students began to leave the auditorium at this point. The students were orderly as they left. When the group left I proceeded with the remaining students and began to take the attendance. I never assigned anyone to seminars because Mr. Seretny (School Principal) rushed in at that point to inform me that trouble had developed outside and for the safety of all pupils we were closing school. We informed the students what was happening and asked them to leave the building by the Cresent Street and Munson Steet exits and go home.

In talking with other administrators later I found out that conditions outside the school were very orderly. It was at this time that the Mayor appeared in the building and briefly spoke to the Principal and Assistant Principal. He observed the students leaving the building. One student was knocking on a door. It is reported that the Mayor gave the order to "get that boy out of there". The Mayor's driver then rushed out, grabbed the boy and began struggling with him. It was this incident which began the actions which followed. At no point did any school official (to my knowledge) call for police assistance. At no time was it felt that there was any need for uniformed police. No one in the school knows who put in the call for police, but they came. The students became angry when they saw other students being arrested.

It was reported in the paper that the incident which set off the disturbance was the striking of an administrator by a student. It was also said that students began their riot in the school and then moved outside. Both statements were grossly incorrect. Mr. Vitelli was injured when he tried to break up the struggle between the student and the Mayor's driver. Mr. Seretny went outside after the trouble began and was hit in the mouth by an elbow in the scuffle.

On the six o'clock news from Hartford, it was stated that the Mayor was attempting to break up the disturbance and when this failed police moved in to quell the disorder. This statement like those in the local news paints a picture which shows the Negro in his usual role--wrong!

It is my professional opinion that the disturbance which occurred at Hillhouse would not have taken place had the police not been there. I further believe, that the distorted manner in which the events were reported is totally unfair to the students and their parents. The students are guilty both by these statements and by implication of something which is not true.

Students and parents who know me know that I will not cover for students when they are wrong. As a matter of fact, I know that I am very hard on all students because I believe in them so much. If a student is wrong, and if what he does is of a serious nature, I will suspend him. I do not condone patting students on the head when they do wrong. But at the same time I do not feel that adults have the right because they are adults to mistreat youngsters, whatever form this may take. I have spoken to many students at Hillhouse about their behavior. I have sent many students home for misbehavior. And, I will continue to do this so long as I believe that education is as important as it is for the Black child.

The question is frequently asked today, what does the black man want? Why is everyone so excited? Well, the kind of insult which is given the Black community, both in the way in which the situation was handled and in the way in which it was reported is what the fight is all about. The picture was again painted of the Black student who has done wrong, which justifies the presence and action of the police. The larger seg-

cont. p. 16

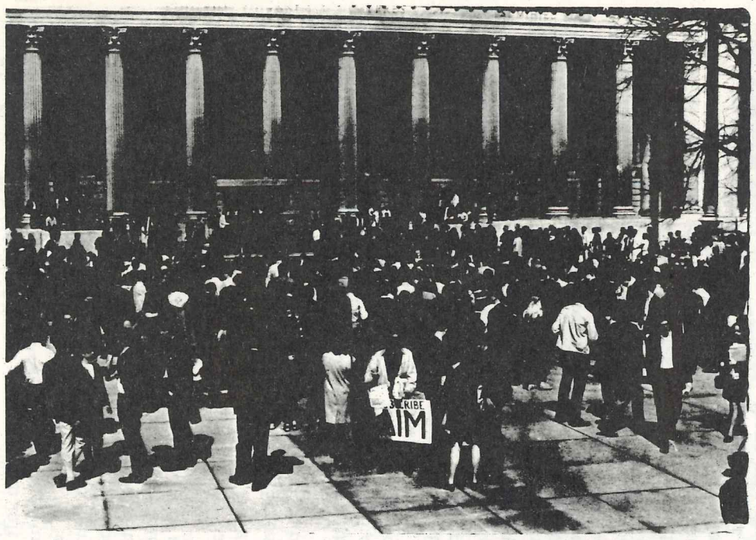
hillhouse cont.

ment of the community needs this and accepts it. But the people involved know what really happened and how wrong it is. And, we become justifiably angry.

You are cordially invited to a

DINNER

in honor of
CATHERINE G. RORABACK
on Thursday, May 23 at 7 o'clock at Lee High School. Speakers will be Attorney Leonard Budin, a noted advocate of civil liberties and Thomas I. Emerson, Sterling Professor of Law, Frederick Harris Jr. and other community people. Rabbi Robert Goldberg will be Master of Ceremonies. For further information and RESERVATIONS please call Mrs. Louise Harris 787-5322 or Mrs. Edith Woodard 776-7856.



Please fill out this form and send it with your check to:

AIM Newsletter
241 Orange St.
New Haven, Connecticut 06510

$2 subscription
$5 subscription
more $
free

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Gift Subscription: $2 or $5 each

Please let us know if you are leaving for the summer or changing your address!

Note: The author of last issue's "Program for '68" is Bob Cook.

American Independent Movement
241 Orange Street
New Haven, Conn. 06510

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID 3.6¢
New Haven, Conn.
Permit No. 89